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EDITORIAL.

EDITORS, E. D. COPE AND J. S. KINGSLEY.

THE press has taken hold of a question of vital interest to the science of this country, which too many of the scientific men themselves have been unwilling to touch. The New York *Herald* of Sunday, the 12th Jan., contains an exposition of some abuses which have been for a long time an open secret among the geologists and paleontologists of the country. It is unfortunate for the reputation of some of our scientific men that they have neglected the matter so long that its adjudication has now passed into the hands of the public. The matter should have been quietly disposed of among themselves, but it has now gone before a wider tribunal, in which the susceptibilities of individuals will be less considered. The question of scientific honesty and scientific property is at stake, and it is strange that scientific men everywhere in the country have not perceived that the personal reputation of every scientific man in the country is involved in the toleration of a state of affairs such as is described in the above mentioned interview.

The facts are now well known. A wealthy man who desires to pursue a scientific career, finding the labor of doing so distasteful, and the solution of the questions involved inconveniently difficult, employs a number of "assistants." It turns out that these assistants are not only expected to do the mechanical and clerical work necessary to the pursuit of original research, but also to perform the research itself, and to commit the results to paper. The manuscript thus obtained is issued by a reputable scientific journal, and by the United States Geological Surveys, as the work of the employer of these assistants, his name appearing on the title page, and credit for the authorship of the published contents being assumed by him.

We do not hesitate to say (and in so doing we express the opinion of a majority of scientific men), that while this mode of advancing scientific knowledge may be successful, it is disreputable and fraudulent. However, it is probable that there is no

written law forbidding it, so that had this institution been content to remain a private one, it might have pursued its course for many years. But the reputation obtained in the manner above described, proved too impressive to be passed without special recognition. Between ignorance of the facts and pachydermatous consciences, the proprietor of the establishment which turned out such results was made president of the United States National Academy of Sciences. It became evident also that so worthy an adjunct in the advancement of science should have the recognition and financial aid of the United States. So the trader in brains became the paleontologist of the United States Geological Survey.

Both of these appointments do no credit to those who effected them. In the latter case the responsibility rests on a single man, the director of the Survey. The spectacle thus presented by two of the three leading scientific organizations of the United States Government, is one which should make every American blush.

Some work of the same kind as that produced by this establishment had been ordered by a previous congress, and the execution of it had been placed in the hands of the Geological Survey by the Secretary of the Interior. For eight years the Director of the Geological Survey has failed to carry out the orders of the Secretary, and the concurrent resolutions of Congress. To do so would be to anticipate some of the work of the new organization which had been adopted by the Survey. The man who hired others to do this work could not tolerate another man who did his own work so "near the throne." Besides, he could not do the work without the specimens used by his predecessor, the other man, and so he must get possession of them, although they are the private property of the latter. The materials on which the work ordered by Congress and the Secretary were to be based must be presented to the Government, and then the question of publishing the work would be considered! It is Naboth's Vineyard with two Ahabs. The modern Naboth, however, lived in the land of newspapers and of public opinion, and these have been heard from. Ahab has not yet obtained the vineyard.

—THE numbers of the *NATURALIST* for 1889 were issued (by the grace of the Leonard Scott Publication Co.) at the following

dates, so far as they have appeared. January, March 1st; February, May 31st; March, June 28th; April, August 15th; May, September 28th; June, December 1st; July, November 18th; August, January 5th, 1890; September, February 4th, 1890. The numbers for the present year, it is anticipated, will be issued on time.

RECENT LITERATURE.

"Challenger" Voyage.—W. P. Sladen's Asteroidea.¹—

The thirtieth volume of the Challenger Reports is a double one, consisting of 935 pages of text, and of 118 plates and a map. The report does not confine itself to the star fishes collected by the Challenger, but includes also those taken by the Lightning, Porcupine, Knight-Errant, and Triton. In the Challenger collection were 268 species belonging to 84 genera, and of these 184 forms are described as new. The total number of new species described in the work is 196, besides 15 forms that are considered as only varieties. Mr. Sladen reduces Perrier's 52 genera to 49, three of the genera proving invalid or synonymous, and the Challenger Expedition furnished examples of 38 of these previously known genera. So large a number of new genera have been described that the synoptic list of all known species of recent Asteroidea, given at the end of the Report, enumerates 137 genera and 810 species.

The long list of of abyssal Asteroids brought to light by the Challenger and other deep sea expeditions, has opened a new chapter in the history of the Asteroidea, and Mr. Sladen has attempted a classification upon a new basis, more in accordance with morphological characters than preceding ones. The fundamental points of structure selected by Mr. Sladen are: (1) those which adapt the organism for the functions of respiration and excretion; (2) the character of the ambulacral skeleton; and (3) that of the ambital skeleton.

For the first he chooses the organs called "papulæ" by Stimpson, transparent membranous cæca which penetrate the body wall, and permit an exchange by osmosis with the free fluid without. These papulæ may be confined to a limited area on the abactinal surface, never passing beyond the boundary of the supero-marginal plates (Ste-

¹ Voyage of H. M. S. Challenger. Report on the Asteroidea collected during 1873-76. By W. Percy Sladen, F.L.S., F.G.S. Vol. XXX. 1889.